

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

USNATO BRUSSELS 864

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TAGS: PFOR PINT SOPN US UR

1. ACCORDING TO A TWO-COLUMN STORY BY D. KARELIN IN JANUARY 10 SOVYETSKAYA ROSSIYA (FULL TEXT BELOW), THE VOA'S COVERAGE OF DETENTE REFLECTS NEITHER THE VIEWS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, NOR OF THE ADMINISTRATION OR OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, NOR OF MR. KEOGH'S DIRECTIVE TO IT, BUT SATISFIES THE PREJUDICES OF ITS EDITORS. DESPITE MR. KEOGH'S ANNOUNCED POLICY OF INTERPRETING US FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES TO THE WORLD, THE VOA IS PLAYING WITH FACTS, SOVYETSKAYA ROSSIYA

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SAYS, AND MISINTERPRETS THE REAL VIEWS OF AMERICANS ON

DETENTE. GALLUP REPORTS THAT 74 PERCENT OF AMERICANS ARE NOW IN FAVOR OF BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE USSR-- AS COMPARED WITH ONLY 3 PERCENT IN 1954-- AND SUCH FIGURES AS SIMON AND MORTON AND INGERSOLL SPEAK BEFORE CONGRESS IN FAVOR OF GRANTING MFN STATUS TO THE USSR. BUT THE VOA SELECTS QUOTES TO "CAST A SHADOW ON SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY," STRESSING THE VIEWS OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE A BETTERMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE USSR AND THE USA AND ADHERENCE TO THE CSCE FINAL ACT.

2. COMMENT: IT IS UNUSUAL FOR A SOVIET NEWSPAPER TO PRAISE SO THOROUGHLY THE POSITIVE "TREND" AMONG THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, HIGH ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS, AND BANKERS, ALL IN THE CONTEXT OF DISCUSSING GENERAL ATTITUDES ON US-USSR RELATIONS. THRUST OF ARTICLE IS THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS BEHAVING IN LINE WITH THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT AND ONLY USIA, THE VOA AND "CONSERVATIVE CIRCLES IN THE USA" ARE OUT OF LINE. END LOU, BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.

3. BEGIN FULL TEXT.

WHEN THE VOICE IS HYPOCRITICAL.

OUR AGE IS OFTEN REFERRED TO AS "THE INFORMATION AGE." NO OTHER FIELD OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WHICH AFFECTS THE INTERESTS OF HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IS DEVELOPING AS RAPIDLY AS RADIO AND TV. NOWADAYS ONE CAN LEARN WHAT HAPPENS IN THE MOST REMOTE CORNERS OF THE GLOBE WITHOUT LEAVING ONE'S APARTMENT.

IT HAS BEEN NOTICED LONG AGO THAT THE PROGRESS OF SCIENCE MAY NOT NECESSARILY SERVE THE WELFARE OF MANKIND. SOMETIMES ITS ACHIEVEMENTS ARE USED FOR QUITE DIFFERENT PURPOSES. THE SAME IS TRUE AS FAR AS MODERN MEANS OF MASS INFORMATION ARE CONCERNED.

THIS IS NOT THE FIRST YEAR THAT "THE VOICE OF AMERICA" BROADCASTS TO THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER COUNTRIES OF SOCIALIST COMMUNITY. THIS STATION, WITH A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR ANNUAL BUDGET, POSSESSES A POWERFUL TECHNICAL BASE AND A HUGE STAFF. "THE VOICE OF AMERICA" IS THE LARGEST SERVICE OF THE USIA. THE AIM OF VOA, ACCORDING TO USIA DIRECTOR JAMES KEOGH, IS "TO INTERPRET THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE USA AND AMERICAN REALITY IN GENERAL TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LISTENERS ABROAD."

THIS STATEMENT ON THE BASIC PURPOSE OF THE VOA REFLECTS A CERTAIN CHANGE IN BOTH ITS PREVIOUS PROGRAMS AND OF USIA ACTIVITIES AS A WHOLE. IN THE PAST, THIS AGENCY AND ITS RADIO SERVICE, AS THE USIA STAFF REFER TO IT, CALLED FOR "UPPRISINGS" IN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES.

THE TONE OF VOA PROGRAMS, IF IT CAN BE PUT THIS WAY,

HAS CHANGED SOMEWHAT RECENTLY. "AMERICAN PROPAGANDA HAS ASSUMED A MORE RESTRAINED TONE" SAID AN AUTHOR, CLOSE TO THE USIA.

RESTRAINT IS A POSITIVE FEATURE. BUT USIA INTERPRETS RESTRAINT ITS OWN WAY. WHEREAS THE "VOA" SKIPS MANY A SHARP POINT IN TALKING ABOUT THE DOMESTIC SITUATION IN THE STATES, USING ROSEY HUES WHICH ARE IN DRASTIC CONTRAST WITH ACTUAL REALITY, IT GETS VERY GLOOMY WHEN TALKING ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION.

"RESTRAINT" BECOMES ESPECIALLY OBVIOUS IN CONNECTION WITH SUCH A MAJOR MODERN DEVELOPMENT AS DETENTE.

"THE VOA" DEVOTES A LOT OF TIME TO THIS SUBJECT. VIRTUALLY DAILY CURRENT INFORMATION, QUOTES AND COMMENTS ARE BROADCAST TO THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. BUT THIS INFORMATION IS PREPARED IN A VERY SPECIFIC WAY.

LET US TAKE FOR INSTANCE THE CSCE AGREEMENTS, REACHED IN HELSINKI. JUST A WEEK AFTER THE CONFERENCE THE RADIO STATION SAID THAT "THE POLICY OF DETENTE CAUSED CRITICISM BY DIFFERENT CONSERVATIVE CIRCLES IN AMERICA."

AS IS SEEN FROM ITS PROGRAMS, "THE VOICE OF AMERICA" BROADCASTS TO THE USSR ARE CONCERNED MOST OF ALL IN GIVING VOICE TO DETENTE'S ENEMIES. TO THIS END STATEMENTS ARE SELECTED BY THOSE WHO ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR HOSTILITY TO THE HELSINKI DECISIONS, AND TO THOSE POSITIVE CHANGES WHICH HAVE DEVELOPED IN RECENT YEARS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES. THESE ARE PEOPLE LIKE NATO GENERAL SECRETARY LUNS, FORMER US SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SCHLESINGER, AND OTHER WELL-KNOWN AND MORE OBSCURE PERSONS, WHO USE ANY EXCUSE TO SLANDER DETENTE.

THESE STATEMENTS ARE EDITED FOR THE DAILY BROADCASTS WITH OBSERVANCE OF CERTAIN, SO TO SAY, PROPORTIONS. BUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IF ONE LINES UP ALL OF THEM, ONE GETS A VERY GLOOMY PICTURE.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, THIS IS WHAT THE LEADERS OF THE VOA AIM FOR, BELIEVING THAT SMALL EVERYDAY DOSES OF "SEASONED INFORMATION" MAY, FINALLY, CREATE AMONG THE LISTENERS THE IMPRESSION DESIRED BY USIA, ABOUT THE PROCESSES GOING ON IN THE WORLD AMONG WHICH IS THE CONDITION OF SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

BY DRESSING UP NATO ACTIVITIES AND POSITIONS ON CRUCIAL ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, "THE VOA" TRIES TO PRESENT THE USSR AND OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES VERY UNFAVORABLY. IN THIS CASE AS WELL THEY USE CAREFULLY FILTERED INFORMATION.

TAKE AS AN INSTANCE A STATEMENT OF A US SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADER, QUOTED BY "VOA": "WATCHING

POST-HELSINKI DEVELOPMENTS, HE SAID, AMERICAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS SEE NO SIGNS THAT THE USSR AND HER ALLIES ARE DOING ANYTHING TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS OF THE FINAL ACT."

AS THEY SAY, YOU JUST CANNOT GO ANY FURTHER. GRANTED EVEN VERY ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES IN THE POLICY VIEWS OF ONE OR ANOTHER COUNTRY, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO COME UP WITH SUCH A STATEMENT.

VOA PEOPLE "MISSED" THE SOVIET INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN AFTER HELSINKI IN DIFFERENT AREAS, INCLUDING THE FIELD OF INFORMATION EXCHANGE.

THESE THINGS HAPPEN OFTEN. REFUSING "UNCONFIRMED" INFORMATION, NOT REFERRING TO THE PERSON WHO SUPPLIED IT-- THUS, ALLEGEDLY, PROVING LACK OF BIAS--VOA STAFFERS SELECT FROM VERY SPECIFIC SOURCES THE STATEMENTS THEY NEED.

THUS THEY SORT OF OBSERVE OBJECTIVITY AND KEEP THEIR HANDS CLEAN: THIS IS NOT WHAT THEY SAY, THIS IS WHAT OTHER PERSONS SAY, EXPRESSING, ALLEGEDLY, THEIR OWN POINTS OF VIEW. THE FACT THAT THESE POINTS OF VIEW COINCIDE COMPLETELY WITH THE VOA'S OPINION SHOULD BE IGNORED AS PETTY DETAIL, THE EDITORS BELIEVE.

OTHER OPINIONS, EXPRESSED BY SOBER-MINDED AMERICANS, OF WHICH THERE ARE MANY, ARE VERY SELDOM INCLUDED IN VOA NEWS BROADCASTS OR COMMENT ARISES.

IN SEPTEMBER "THE VOA" QUOTED GALLUP, THE DIRECTOR OF A PUBLIC OPINION INSTITUTION: "PUBLIC OPINION IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATES HAS VERY RARELY CHANGED SO QUICKLY, AS IT HAS LATELY IN FAVOR OF BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE USSR. COMPARISON OF PUBLIC OPINION POLLS SHOWS THAT IN 1954 3 PERCENT OF AMERICANS FAVERED BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE USSR, COMPARED WITH 74 PERCENT IN 1974."

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THIS IS REALLY QUITE AN IMPRESSIVE SHIFT. WHAT HAS
CAUSED THIS CHANGE? WHAT DO ORDINARY AMERICANS THINK
OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS?
THESE AND MANY OTHER QUESTIONS SHOULD HAVE ATTRACTED THE
ATTENTION OF A THINKING JOURNALIST. I DO NOT DOUBT THE
HIGH PROFESSIONAL LEVEL OF AMERICAN JOURNALISTS AND THEIR
PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS. THAT IS WHY IT IS EVEN
STRANGER THAT THESE QUESTIONS DID NOT ATTRACT ANY VOA
ATTENTION. IT LOOKS LIKE PROFESSIONALISM HERE SERVES
QUITE DIFFERENT PURPOSES.

VOA HAS JUST AS LITTLE USE FOR THE STATEMENTS OF
THOSE WHO PROPOSE FURTHER PROGRESS IN RELATIONS BETWEEN
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THE USSR AND THE USA, OR FOR THE FACTS INDICATING THE
ADMINISTRATION'S ASPIRATIONS TO CONTINUE DETENTE, TO CONCLUDE THE
AGREEMENT ON SALT WITH THE USSR.

EARLY LAST DECEMBER THE SENATE TRADE COMMITTEE HELD
HEARINGS ON "EAST-WEST TRADE AND THE US ROLE, 1976-1980."
MANY SPEAKERS, INCLUDING SECRETARY OF TREASURY SIMON,
SHOWED THAT TRADE WITH SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE
USSR, IS A "MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TWO-WAY STREET." SIMON
SPOKE IN FAVOR OF REMOVING DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS SOCIALIST
COUNTRIES, IN FAVOR OF GIVING THEM MFN.

SECRETARY OF COMMERCE MORTON, EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

PRESIDENT CASEY, AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE INGERSOLL
SPOKE IN THE SAME SPIRIT.

ACCOUNTS OF THESE HEARINGS DID NOT ATTRACT THE VOA'S
ATTENTION. DURING THOSE DAYS, THEY CONTINUED QUOTING
STATEMENTS AGAINST IMPROVEMENT OF SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS,
ATTEMPTING TO BLACKEN THE USSR'S FOREIGN POLICY.
THE VOA KEPT TO ITS OLD LINE, WHICH IS TO PRESENT DETENTE
AS A "FRAGILE FLOWER", NOT ABLE TO COPE WITH HARDSHIPS.

THERE IS A SAYING AMONG AMERICAN JOURNALISTS: "GOOD
NEWS IS BAD NEWS, UNLESS IT AFFECTS YOU PERSONALLY."

IT SEEMS THE VOA PEOPLE ARE ALSO GUIDED BY THIS MOTTO.
BUT THE IRRITATED VOICE WHICH PRESENTS EVENTS, THE POLICY
OF THE USSR AND THE MOOD OF WIDE CIRCLES OF THE AMERICAN
PUBLIC THROUGH A DISTORTED MIRROR, PREVENTS IMPROVEMENT
OF RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES, RELATIONS UPON WHICH
TO A GREAT EXTENT DEPEND THE PRESERVATION AND CONSOLIDATION
OF PEACE ON EARTH. END TEXT. END UNCLASSIFIED. MATLOCK

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